



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Headquarters

419 Decatur Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

Jean Lafitte National Historical
Park and Preserve

504-589-3882 phone
504-589-3864 fax

Chalmette Battlefield Task Force Minutes

Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting May 26, 2004 at 3:00 p.m.
Location: St. Bernard Government Complex
Council Chambers Meeting Room
8245 W. Judge Perez Drive
Chalmette, Louisiana 70043

Task Force Members Present:

Cpt. Bonnie Pepper-Cook
Mrs. George W. Davis
Mr. Alvin W. Guillot
Mrs. Elizabeth McDougall, Chairperson
Ms. Faith Moran
Mr. Paul Perez
Col. John F. Pugh, Jr.
Supt. Geraldine Smith
Mr. Mike Varnado
Mr. Tim Bemisderfer, Federal Designated Officer for Regional Director
Southeast Regional Office

Task Force Members Absent:

Mr. Eric Cager
Mr. Anthony Fernandez, Jr.
Mr. Drew Heaphy

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 16, 2004 at 3:00 p.m.
Location – St. Bernard Government Complex
Council Chambers Meeting Room
8245 W. Judge Perez Drive
Chalmette, Louisiana 70043

The meeting was called to order by Elizabeth McDougall at 3:10 p.m. at the St. Bernard Government Complex. The 3/4/04 meeting minutes were presented for approval. P. Perez motioned to accept the minutes, B. Cook seconded, and the minutes were accepted then signed by E. McDougall and T. Bemisderfer.

The Chair asked for a review of old business from Mr. Tim Bemisderfer, the Designated Federal Officer. He requested a change to the agenda to cover the new business first and then address the

old business due to time constraints. B. Cook motioned to adjust the agenda for the day and P.Perez seconded.

New Business: Review of Draft Task Force Sub-committee Report

The Chalmette Task Force appointed a subcommittee to draft the Task Force final report. Faith Moran, chairperson for the subcommittee, presented the draft report to the Task Force members. Other members of the subcommittee included Elizabeth McDougall, and Bonnie Pepper-Cook. Drew Heaphy and Tony Fernandez were unavailable.

During the reading of the draft report to the Task Force, various points were discussed.

- One question in particular requires assistance from the park staff to obtain the whereabouts of the furniture, which was once in the Malus-Beauregard house.
- The subcommittee was asked to be more suggestive than demanding in their report. Their recommendations should emphasize the added value and/or benefits to incorporating an idea.
- Terminology should be chosen carefully to fully capture the recommendations and address their audience.
- The group was reminded about the importance of obtaining group consensus first on the recommendations versus editing words on the draft.
- Using bulleted items under each recommendation might be easier to read and present than using paragraph form.
- The park has addressed some of the concerns of the group over the past year which should be considered for inclusion in the report i.e., the Condition Assessment of the National Cemetery, plans for the commemorative markers, the cleaning of the monument, etc.
- The Task Force could indicate their endorsement or disagreement with the park's actions over the past year as well as with future plans.
- Remember your audience! Suggest what can be done in the future.
- If the group wants the operation of the park to be more of an economic contributor to the surrounding area, the terminology needs to be chosen carefully to describe the atmosphere desired.
- Park managers recognize the importance of advertising and marketing in tourism development. However, Department of Interior and NPS policy (NPS Management Policy 9.3.5) place significant restrictions on the display and distribution of commercial notices within the park and specifically prohibit engaging in paid advertising or marketing campaigns. None the less, within this framework, the park does have has some flexibility to participate in limited promotional activities through its concession contracts and cooperative association agreements.
- A final suggestion for the report was to avoid identifying any new concerns or issues in the concluding paragraphs, which are not mentioned earlier in the report.

Task Force members with issues or concerns for inclusion in the report, should submit their ideas to F. Moran prior to the next meeting on June 16, 2004.

The National Park Service will ultimately take their report recommendations and apply them to the GMP designs to determine how well the recommendations are addressed.

Old Business: Review of Development Concepts

T. Bemisderfer provided handouts of the latest Development Concepts, which are not official concepts but only an expression of a lot of ideas from the recent public meetings. The ideas, originally four concepts, were consolidated into three following a weeklong planning workshop of technical park staff and cultural resource experts.

One concept, the Historic Continuum Concept, is a hybrid, which shows the partnership between the NPS and St. Bernard Parish with a Joint Visitor Center located just outside the park. Few physical changes are made on-site as possible while still allowing visitors to enjoy current activities. The focus remains the battle. A consolidated visitor services area is at the boat dock with the possibility of continuing to use the existing Visitor Center.

The Battlefield Experience Concept shows the challenge of trying to interpret a battle on a landscape that is not reflective of the original i.e., it includes the river road and the Malus Beaugard house. It tries to reflect back to the pre-colonial landscape of when the battle was fought while still allowing much flexibility for activities.

The Enhanced Interpretation Concept encourages new and returning visitors to learn more about the site and local history by participating in a variety of interactive programs lead by NPS rangers and trained volunteers. A new interpretive center, parking area, renovated tour boat landing, and motorized group tour system provide a centrally located interpretive and orientation point.

Each of the three concepts show a separation of vehicles and pedestrian traffic paths. Much consideration was given to parking. These are only expressions of many ideas and these will be compared to the Task Force report. These are already generally reflective of the Task Force ideas and these will later be presented to the public for comments.

Mr. Bemisderfer reminded Task Force members that the three concepts are not official alternatives. As 'works in progress', he asked Task Force members not distribute them beyond our immediate work group until opportunities for additional comment were provided to other internal stakeholders such as NPS officials, federal and state agencies, and tribal governments. If all goes well, Mr. Bemisderfer estimated that the concepts should be ready for public comment later this summer.

T. Bemisderfer wrapped up the discussion by reminding the Task Force members of their timeline for a finished and signed report by August 18, 2004. All members of the Task Force must agree upon the final report and it must be in a format agreed upon by all members. By the last day, all members must sign the report.

The subcommittee will meet June 1, 2003 at the St. Bernard Government Complex, time to be determined, to incorporate the Task Force suggestions into the final report.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.. The next meeting date is set for June 16, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. at the St. Bernard Government Complex.

Mrs. Elizabeth McDougall 6/16/04
Mrs. Elizabeth McDougall, Chairperson Date

Tim Bemisderfer 6/16/04
Mr. Tim Bemisderfer, Federal Designated Officer Date

Task Force minutes are submitted Jun 16, 2004 and will be posted on the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve web site <http://www.nps.gov/jela>